

Insurances.

NOTICE.

THE following Resolutions having reference to Insurances in Hongkong, adopted at a Meeting in London of the various Fire Insurance Companies represented in Hongkong and by the Hongkong Fire Insurance Company, are circulated for general information:—

1st.—That in future, the rates for short periods be calculated as follows:
Not exceeding one month, 1/4 of the annual rate.
Above one month and not exceeding three months, 1/2 " " "
Above three months and not exceeding six months, 3/4 " " "
Above six months, The full " " "

2nd.—That Petroleum and its Products should be stored by themselves in buildings constructed in conformity with the following regulations:—

"The Building to be of Ground Floor, only, constructed of Brick or Stone, with Tile, Slate or Metal roof, such roof to have apertures for the purpose of ventilation, the whole of such building, to be sunk at least two feet below the surface of the road or street, or in the event of the floor not being sunk, then, any openings in the walls of said building, to be built up to the height of at least three feet above the level of the road or street, in order to prevent the petroleum, &c. flowing out of the building in case of fire."

3rd.—That Saltpetre and Nitrates should be stored in like manner in buildings of substantial structure (without internal wood work) appropriated exclusively to such articles.

4th.—That the rate for the foregoing articles be not less than (2 1/2) two per cent. per annum.

5th.—That Gunpowder should be stored in some fitting place either on shore or in the Bay, under proper regulations and at sufficient distance from all other property.

6th.—That a clause be inserted in every policy covering ordinary godowns, declaring that Petroleum and its products, Saltpetre, Nitrates and Gunpowder, are not deposited therein.

7th.—That the foregoing regulations regarding the storage of goods do come into operation on and after the 6th July next.

8th.—That no Insurances on Chinese Houses shall in future be taken at a lower rate than (2 1/2) two and a half per cent. per annum.

JARDINE, MATHESON & Co.,
Agents, Alliance Fire Insurance Company,
Hongkong Fire Insurance Company,
Gibb, Livingston & Co.,
Agents China Fire Insurance Company,
Imperial Fire Insurance Company,
Phoenix Insurance Company,
Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company.

R. S. WALKER & Co.,
Agents, Royal Insurance Company of Liverpool.

ARNOLD, KARBURG & Co.,
Agents, Lancashire Insurance Company.

HOLLIDAY, WISE & Co.,
Agents, London Assurance Corporation.

QUEEN FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY,
Manchester Fire Insurance Company,
GILMAN & Co.,
Agents, North British and Mercantile Insurance Company.

TURNER & Co.,
Agents, Northern Assurance Company.

WM. POSTAU & Co.,
Agents for the Hamburg and Bremen Fire Insurance Company.

ADAM SCOTT & Co., (in Liquidation),
Agents, Sun Fire Office.

RUSSELL & Co.,
Agents, Pacific Insurance Company of San Francisco.

ALFRED WILKINSON & Co.,
Agents, Guardian Assurance Company.

Per pro the Borneo Company, Limited,
JOHN FRASER,
Agents, Commercial Union Insurance Company.

HONGKONG FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY.

NOTICE.

FROM and after this date the following rates will be charged for Short Period Insurances, viz:—

Not exceeding one month, 1/4 of the Annual Rate.

Above 1 month and not exceeding three months, 1/2 " " "

Above 3 months and not exceeding six months, 3/4 " " "

Above 6 months, The full Annual Rate.

JARDINE, MATHESON & Co.,
General Managers,
Hongkong Fire Insurance Company,
Hongkong, April 7, 1868.

ALLIANCE FIRE ASSURANCE COMPANY.

NOTICE.

FROM and after this date the following rates will be charged for Short Period Insurances, viz:—

Not exceeding one month, 1/4 of the Annual Rate.

Above 1 month and not exceeding three months, 1/2 " " "

Above 3 months and not exceeding six months, 3/4 " " "

Above 6 months, The full Annual Rate.

JARDINE, MATHESON & Co.,
Agents, Alliance Fire Insurance Company,
Hongkong, April 7, 1868.

Insurances.

NORTH BRITISH & MERCANTILE INSURANCE COMPANY.

Incorporated by Royal Charter and Special Acts of Parliament.
ESTABLISHED 1809.
CAPITAL £2,000,000.
ACCUMULATED FUNDS £2,233,927.
ANNUAL REVENUE £407,263.

THE Undersigned Agents at Hongkong for the above Company are prepared to grant Policies against FIRE, to the extent of £10,000 on any Building, or on Merchandise in the same.

GILMAN & Co.
Hongkong, June 21, 1864.

NOTICE.

NORTH BRITISH AND MERCANTILE INSURANCE COMPANY.

FROM and after this date the following Rates will be charged in Short Period Insurances, viz:—

Not exceeding one month, 1/4 of the annual rate.

Above 1 month, and not exceeding 3 months, 1/2 " " "

Above 3 months, and not exceeding 6 months, 3/4 " " "

Above 6 months, The full Annual rate.

GILMAN & Co.,
Agents, North British and Mercantile Insurance Company.

Hongkong, April 7, 1868.

NORTH BRITISH AND MERCANTILE INSURANCE COMPANY.

REDUCTION IN THE RATES OF PREMIUM.

Detached and semi-detached Dwelling-Houses removed from Town, and their Contents, 1/4 per cent.

Other Dwelling-Houses used strictly as such, and their Contents, 1/4 per cent.

Godowns, Offices, Shops, &c., and their Contents, 1 per cent.

GILMAN & Co.,
Agents, North British and Mercantile Insurance Company.

Hongkong, March 9, 1868.

THE QUEEN INSURANCE COMPANY.

CAPITAL—TWO MILLION STERLING.

THE Undersigned having been appointed Agents for the above named Company are prepared to grant Policies against Fire, either at this Port, or at Macao, Canton or Whampoa, to the extent of £15,000, in any one-Risk upon Buildings or Merchandise, on the usual terms.

HOLLIDAY, WISE & Co.,
Hongkong, June 8, 1867.

NOTICE.

QUEEN INSURANCE COMPANY.

THE following Rates will be charged in future for short period Insurances, viz:—

Not exceeding 1 month, 1/4 per cent.

Above 1 month and not exceeding 3 months, 1/2 do.

Above 3 months and not exceeding 6 months, 3/4 do.

Above 6 months, The full annual rate.

HOLLIDAY, WISE & Co.,
Agents.

Hongkong, April 8, 1868.

THE LONDON ASSURANCE CORPORATION.

THE Undersigned having been appointed Agents of the above Corporation are prepared to grant Fire and Marine Insurance on the usual Terms.

HOLLIDAY, WISE & Co.,
Hongkong, December 26, 1867.

LONDON ASSURANCE CORPORATION.

THE following rates will in future be charged for Short Period Insurances:—

One month, 1/4 per cent.

Three months, 1/2 " " "

Six months, 3/4 " " "

HOLLIDAY, WISE & Co.,
Hongkong, April 7, 1868.

NOTICE.

MANCHESTER FIRE ASSURANCE COMPANY.

THE following Rates will be charged in future for short period Insurances, viz:—

Not exceeding 1 month, 1/4 per cent.

Above 1 month and not exceeding 3 months, 1/2 do.

Above 3 months and not exceeding 6 months, 3/4 do.

Above 6 months, The full annual rate.

HOLLIDAY, WISE & Co.,
Agents.

Hongkong, April 8, 1868.

MANCHESTER FIRE ASSURANCE COMPANY OF MANCHESTER AND LONDON.

CAPITAL ONE MILLION STERLING.

THE DIRECTORS have the pleasure to announce the appointment of Messrs Holliday, Wise & Co. as agents for the Company at Hongkong, Shanghai, Canton, Hankow, and Fuchow, who are prepared to grant Insurances at current rates and of whom all useful information may be obtained.

By Order of the Board,
JAS. B. NORTHOFT, Secretary.

IMPERIAL FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY.

THE Undersigned having been appointed Agents for the above Company at this Port, are prepared to grant Policies against Fire to the extent of \$90,000 on Buildings, or on Goods stored therein.

GILB, LIVINGSTON & Co.,
Hongkong, August 24, 1864.

Insurances.

NOTICE.

IMPERIAL FIRE OFFICE.
FROM and after this date the following Rates will be charged for Short Period Insurances, viz:—

Not exceeding 1 month, 1/4 of the annual rate.

Above 1 month and not exceeding 3 months, 1/2 do.

Above 3 months and not exceeding 6 months, 3/4 do.

Above 6 months, The full annual rate.

GILB, LIVINGSTON & Co.,
Agents, Imperial Fire Insurance Company,
Hongkong, April 7, 1868.

IMPERIAL FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY.

REDUCTION IN THE RATES OF PREMIUM.

UNTIL further notice the following Annual Rates will be charged for Fire Insurance, viz:—

Detached and Semi-detached Dwelling Houses removed from the Town, and their Contents, 1/4 per cent.

Other Dwelling Houses used strictly as such, and their Contents, 1/4 per cent.

Godowns, Offices, Shops, &c., and their Contents, 1 per cent.

GILB, LIVINGSTON & Co.,
Agents, Imperial Fire Insurance Company.

Hongkong, March 6, 1865.

BOMBAY INSURANCE COMPANY AND FORBES & CO.'S CONSTITUENTS INSURANCE COMPANY.

THE Undersigned having been appointed Agents for the above Companies are prepared to accept Risks on the usual terms.

GILB, LIVINGSTON & Co.,
Hongkong, February 26, 1868.

ALBERT LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY.

ESTABLISHED 1838.

CAPITAL, £500,000.

Managing Agents in China, Messrs. AUGUSTINE HEARD & Co., Hongkong, Medical Referee, — J. IVOR MURRAY, Esq., M.D.

THE Undersigned having been appointed Managing Agents for the above Company are prepared to accept risks and issue Policies on Life Assurances.

For further particulars, forms of proposals, &c., apply to

AUGUSTINE HEARD & Co.,
Managing Agents in China,
Hongkong, June, 1867.

OCEAN MARINE INSURANCE COMPANY.

LONDON.

INCORPORATED 1859.

CAPITAL, —£1,000,000.

THE Undersigned having been appointed Agents for the above Company are prepared to accept Marine risks and issue Policies at current rates.

AUGUSTINE HEARD & Co.,
Hongkong, June 6, 1867.

LONDON AND PROVINCIAL MARINE INSURANCE COMPANY.

THE Undersigned having been appointed Agents in Hongkong for the above Company, are prepared to grant Marine Risks at current rates.

AUGUSTINE HEARD & Co.,
Hongkong, March 6, 1868.

ROYAL INSURANCE COMPANY.

FIRE AND LIFE.

CAPITAL, £2,000,000.

(LIFE DEPARTMENT.)

22 per cent. per Annum Bonus declared during the last fifteen years on all Profit participating Policies of Two Years' standing.

The utmost liberality practised in the settlement of all Claims, with the representatives of deceased Assurers.

An Assurance for any sum not exceeding £1000 can be effected with the Undersigned without referring to Head-quarters.

By special authority of the Board, Claims are settled at once by the Undersigned without reference to England.

Fees to Medical Referees paid by the Company.

No forfeiture of Policy from unintentional mis-statement.

Premiums payable Half-yearly or Annually at the option of the Assured.

Annual Premiums for an Assurance of £100 for the whole term of Life, including £2 10s. per Cent. for Foreign Risk, which will be deducted during a visit to or a permanent resident in Europe:—

AGE. WITHOUT PARTICIPATION. WITH PARTICIPATION.

15 £3 10 8 24 5 6

20 4 3 3 4 9 4

25 4 8 2 4 14 2

30 4 13 11 4 19 0

35 5 0 0 5 6 2

40 5 8 0 5 14 1

45 5 17 11 6 4 6

50 6 11 7 6 18 3

55 7 11 1 8 0 4

60 8 16 0 9 8 7

N.B. Intermediate ages charged proportionally.

For Forms, for effecting Life Assurances, and for any further information, apply to

ROB. S. WALKER & Co., Agents,
Hongkong, September 3, 1864.

LIFE ASSURANCE.

THE Undersigned have received Authority by a recent Mail to issue LIFE Policies for amounts not exceeding £1000 without reference to the Head Office, as was previously required by the Board.

ROB. S. WALKER & Co.,
Agents, Royal Insurance Company,
Hongkong, January 6, 1865.

Insurances.

NOTICE.

ROYAL INSURANCE COMPANY.
THE following Rates will be charged in future for short period Insurances, viz:—

Not exceeding One Month, 1/4 per cent.

Above One Month and not exceeding Three Months, 1/2 per cent.

Above Three Months and not exceeding Six Months, 3/4 per cent.

Above Six Months, The full Annual Rate of 1 per cent.

ROB. S. WALKER & Co.,
Agents, Royal Insurance Company,
Hongkong, April 7, 1868.

REDUCTION

IN THE RATES OF PREMIUM FOR FIRE INSURANCE.

THE Undersigned have (as already intimated in their Circular dated 14th October last) received authority from the Secretary of the ROYAL INSURANCE COMPANY to reduce the rate of Premium under certain circumstances, on PRIVATE RESIDENCES and on FURNITURE and EFFECTS, therein contained.

In cases of DWELLING-HOUSES removed from the Town, the rate of Premium will be Three-quarters per Cent. in place of One per Cent. per Annum as hitherto charged; and in cases of Residences, so situated, being detached or semi-detached, the rate will be further reduced to One-half per Cent.

The Royal Annual Rates for FIRE INSURANCE on the various classes of Buildings and their contents will therefore remain as follows, until further notice, viz:—

Detached and semi-detached Dwelling-Houses (removed from the Town) and their Contents, 1/4 per cent.

Other Dwelling-Houses (similarly situated) and their Contents, 1/4 per cent.

First Class China House and their Contents, 1 1/2 per cent.

Other Risks as per special arrangement.

ROB. S. WALKER & Co.,
Agents, Royal Insurance Company,
Hongkong, November 9, 1866.

NOTICE.

HE Undersigned having received extended limits from THE ROYAL INSURANCE COMPANY, are now authorised to issue Policies against Fire as follows, viz:—

On any one first-class Building, or on Goods stored therein — in Hongkong, \$50,000; in Macao \$45,000.

ROB. S. WALKER & Co.,
Agents, Royal Insurance Company of Liverpool,
Hongkong, June 17, 1864.

THE UNIVERSAL LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY OF CALCUTTA.

ESTABLISHED 1834.

Subscribed Capital, £500,000.

Accumulated Funds exceed £280,000.

HE Undersigned are empowered to accept LIFE ASSURANCES in the above Society. Full particulars given on application.

ROB. S. WALKER & Co.,
Hongkong, February 21, 1868.

AMICABLE INSURANCE OFFICE.

THE Undersigned having been appointed Agents for the above INSURANCE OFFICE, are prepared to accept Marine Risks, and issue Policies on any first class Sailing Vessels or Steamers, on the usual terms, payable in case of loss, in CHINA, SINGAPORE, CALCUTTA, BOMBAY, or LONDON.

ROB. S. WALKER & Co.,
Hongkong, June 17, 1864.

YANGTZE INSURANCE ASSOCIATION OF SHANGHAI.

DIVIDEND OF (8 per cent.) Eight per cent. has been declared on the Net Premium contributed to the above Association for the year ending 30th September, 1866.

Policy HOLDERS will please send in particulars of their contribution to that date to the Undersigned.

RUSSELL & Co.,
Secretaries.

Hongkong, September 7, 1867.

YANG-TSZE INSURANCE ASSOCIATION OF SHANGHAI.

THE Undersigned having been appointed Secretaries and Agents of this Association, are prepared to issue Policies upon Marine Risks at current rates of premium. Policies can be made payable in London, New York, Bombay, Calcutta, Singapore, Hongkong, Fuchow and Shanghai.

In addition to the usual brokerage this Association returns to the assured of each year at the close of each current year, fifteen (15) per cent. of the profits of the Company for that year divided pro rata to the amount of premium paid by each policy-holder.

RUSSELL & Co.,
Hongkong, March 2, 1867.

PACIFIC INSURANCE COMPANY OF SAN FRANCISCO.

THE Undersigned, Agents for the above Company are prepared to grant Policies against FIRE, on BUILDINGS and GOODS, at current rates.

RUSSELL & Co.,
Hongkong, February 6, 1867.

PACIFIC INSURANCE COMPANY OF SAN FRANCISCO.

THE Undersigned having been appointed Agents in China for the above Insurance Company are prepared to grant Policies covering Marine Risks at the current rates.

RUSSELL & Co.,
Hongkong, July 6, 1866.

Insurances.

BATAVIA SEA & FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY.

THE Undersigned having been appointed Agents in Hongkong for the above named Company are prepared to grant Policies against SEA RISKS, at current rates.

RUSSELL & Co.,
Hongkong, April 1, 1865.

LANCASHIRE INSURANCE COMPANY.

(FIRE AND LIFE.)

CAPITAL—TWO MILLIONS STERLING.

THE Undersigned are prepared to grant Policies against the Risk of FIRE on Buildings

POST-OFFICE NOTIFICATIONS.
MAILS WILL CLOSE:—

Hongkong, April 13, 1888.

J. M. ARMSTRONG
Hongkong, May 1, 1868.

A. H. de Carvalho; London, W. Allen
Co.; Paris, C. Borrani.
Hongkong, May 4, 1886.

JULES EUZIERE,
Hair Dressing Room, Up-stairs
Hongkong, December 4, 1867.

Cloud,	...	...	...	...	8	3
Ozone,	...	...	...	...	4	
Weather,	...	...	...	...	Dull.	Dull.

Tea, and in Prince Kung's communication as 301 Loads of Tea, was not ours, but the property of a Chinese constituent. It formed a portion of 1232 baskets weighing 887, shipped per *Hirado* at Hankow on 2nd May 1866. It was not "dust" in the literal sense of the word, nor yet was it Tea. (Oh! ép) as enumerated in the Tariff. It was, however, described to the Customs authorities at Hankow by its true denomination in Chinese (the character for which we have not at our command at present). Its value in July 1866 was Tls. 4 per picul (or considerably less than the value of Tea dust), and the market to which our Chinese constituent was desirous of shipping it was Tientsin. This however he was unwilling to do if compelled to pay export duty at the rate charged on Tea—viz. Tls. 2.5 per picul; and consequently this particular merchandise, of which the so-called Tea dust or spurious Tea formed a portion, became the subject of special negotiation between our Agent and the Foreign Commissioner of Customs at Hankow. About that time Mr. Giquel, the Commissioner, was exerting himself to obtain a remission of duty on Tea dust and Tea of inferior or spurious quality, and when our agent first applied for permission to ship off the produce in question, he was told by Mr. Giquel to await a further development of his negotiations with the higher authorities. During this interval Mr. Giquel was supplied with a sample of this particular article, and he was informed in writing by Mr. Ringer, of the firm of Messrs. Drysdale Ringer and Co., of Hankow, that it was "prepared Tea refuse, not all Tea but containing nearly two thirds of other kind of leaf," and that it was "of a much less value than the best Tea for which the Tariff is 8 mace per picul." To a subsequent application to the Commissioner of Customs to ship off our constituent's merchandise, (of which the parcel described by Mr. Ringer as above form a portion) our agent received the following written reply: "You can send your application for the Tea dust; the duty instead of being Tls. 2.5 per picul, will be Tls. 1.25." This occurred on the 2nd May 1866. All negotiations between Mr. Giquel and our agent had reference to this particular kind of spurious Tea or so-called Tea dust only, and no question can therefore arise as to the identity of the parcel. Acting upon the authority of the Commissioner, application was made by our agent to ship off 1,232 packages, in the English application called Tea Dust; in the Chinese document by its special character. The permit was granted and the packages shipped at Hankow, under the surveillance of a Foreign Idwaiser who inspected their contents, took a muster of the same to the Customs House and reported the shipment at that office as "Tea Leaf." Duty was paid by our agent at Hankow at the rate of Tls. 1.25 or half the rate chargeable on Tea. The shipment was brought down per steamer *Hirado* to Shanghai and that portion which is especially the subject of this letter was shipped per *La Vierge* to Tientsin.

On arrival at Tientsin the coast trade duty was leviable and our agent demanded the right of passing the shipment at that rate due on Tea, viz. mace 9.5. The Customs authorities however hesitated, but they acceded to a cash payment at such reduced rate and demanded a Bond from our agent for an equal amount, pending reference to the Imperial Commissioner, H. E. Chung How. Mr. Mongan, H. M.'s Consul, exerted his influence in favor of our view of the case, but the Commissioner Chung How decided that the matter required further reference to Peking. This reference met with the usual result. On the 12th July, Mr. Mongan addressed the following letter to our agent.

"I am requested by H. E. Chung How to inform you that the Foreign Board at Peking have decided that the Tea imported by you ex *La Vierge* must pay the full half duty of Tls. 1.25. The Superintendent of Customs at Hankow will have to make good out of his own pocket Tls. 1.25 per picul on this same Tea on account of under-charge Export Duty at that port."

Your obedient servant,
(Signed) J. MORGAN.
It was after this decision in Peking that we were called upon to make good in Hankow, the difference between the half duty paid on exportation in May and Tls. 2.5 per picul leviable on Tea. This we persistently refused to do, except on compulsion through the proper channel, as such payment on our part might have been construed as a tacit admission of error in our dealings with the Customs authorities. It was competent for the Commissioner of Customs to prefer his claim through Her Majesty's Consul, but he did not do so, and the additional duty, subsequently demanded, to this day remains unpaid. We may here mention that for our own satisfaction and that of Mr. Giquel, we obtained in August 1866, from Tientsin under British Consular seal, a muster of our shipment per *La Vierge*. It was forwarded to Hankow and there exhibited to H. B. M. Consul and to Mr. Giquel, who admitted it to be the same as that which we had applied for leave to export at the reduced rate of duty.

A perusal of the above facts will, we trust, set us right in the opinion of the public as regards the fraudulent intention laid to our charge in the Imperial communication and adopted by Sir Rutherford Alcock. So far from any embezzlement on the part of our agent at Hankow having been practised it will be seen how investigation was carried out and how the disapproval of the action of the Customs authorities at Hankow by the Board at Peking, has been converted into an attempted fraud on the revenue by us.

We purpose taking the earliest opportunity of laying our case before Sir Rutherford, but meanwhile we are compelled in justice to ourselves, to beg of you to insert this letter in your paper.

We are, Sir, your obedient servants,
DENT & Co.
Shanghai, 27th April, 1868.

MY FIRST SEA VOYAGE.

BY JAMES D. M'GABE, JR.

When I was eighteen years old, I was apprenticed to a carpenter in the city of Philadelphia. My parents were in very moderate circumstances, and were among the Quakers of that city. I had always wanted to be a sailor, but my parents hated the calling, which in their eyes was connected with every description of wickedness, and insisted that I should learn some honest trade. Accordingly they bound me out to a carpenter also a Quaker. Perhaps if they had been wiser in their choice of the man to whom they gave me, I should have submitted to their will, but they bound me to a hard and cruel master. He used me unkindly, and I soon learned to hate him. I resolved at last to leave him, and as I knew that the law would compel me to return to him as long as I remained within his reach, I determined to carry out my long cherished wish, and go to sea. I left his house one Sunday morning, and strolled down to the Delaware, determined to see if I could not find some means of escaping from my bondage. As I loitered idly on the wharf I was startled by the splash of oars and a voice calling me. Looking around I saw a large vessel in the river below, pulled by six sailors. A stout, red-headed man, evidently in command of the boat, sat in the stern, steering.

"Halloo, lad!" he shouted. "Are you looking for a ship?"
"I replied in the affirmative, and he at once informed me that he was the master of a fine vessel about to sail for the Mediterranean, and that he was in want of another hand. The wages he offered seemed immense to me, and I at once closed with his proposition. As I had brought a bundle of clothing with me, I had no need to return home for anything, and I took my seat in the boat, which shoved off and proceeded down the river. The captain told me he would soon make a sailor of me, and that he had no doubt I would make many friends among the crew. The ship was lying in the river a short distance below the town of Chester, and would set sail as soon as we joined her. The captain seemed to be a pleasant sort of fellow, and I thought myself fortunate in shipping with him. So far as I was concerned, I was fortunate. He was a kind-hearted, generous man, and treated his crew in a manner that made him very popular with them.

"We reached our ship in a couple of hours or so, and at once dropped down the Delaware. By the next morning we had cleared the Capes, and were standing out to sea. I went through the usual initiation of all landsmen, a severe spell of sea-sickness, and when I recovered set myself to work enthusiastically to learn my new profession.

"Then I would talk with some of the old tars about our destination, which I supposed was the Mediterranean, and I frequently noticed the singular expression which came over their faces as they listened to me. I supposed, however, that they were simply asserting their superior wisdom in this way, and as I was a green-horn, I was ashamed to confess my ignorance by asking them what it meant.

"The first inkling I had of the true nature of my calling came only at the end of our voyage. Late one afternoon, we made land in the distance, and by dark we were close to shore. I noticed a great deal of bustle and activity on the ship, but this I supposed was simply the usual attendant of the end of a voyage. The captain told me I might turn in early as I was a new hand at the business, and I availed myself of his permission. When I awoke the next morning the ship was at anchor. I hastened on deck, expecting to see the harbor of some great European port. I almost staggered with astonishment at what I beheld. The ship was riding quietly at anchor in a narrow river. On either side of the stream was a thick forest, the luxuriant and tropical beauty of which told me at once that the scene was not European. A bright-hued bird was singing in the branches of a tree that leaned far over into the water, and on the opposite bank a couple of monkeys were squatting in a palm-tree, gazing at the vessel with an expression cunning intelligence. I gazed at the scene in utter bewilderment, and when I could command my tongue, I turned to an old sailor who was standing near me, and said:

"This is Africa?"
"Yes," he answered, dryly, "this is Africa, youngster. It ain't much like the place you thought you were bound for, but there's a heap more monkey here than there."

"And this ship is a slave!" I exclaimed excitedly. "I have been deceived."
"So it seems, my lad," said the old man, kindly. "But," he added, laying his hand on my arm, "let me give you a piece of advice. The captain of this vessel's a kind man when you don't make him mad. He's taken a liking to you, and you'd best keep on the good side of him. Jest take my advice, youngster, and hold your tongue about being deceived. If your bargain's a bad one make the best of it. You can't help yourself now."

"I thought the old man's advice was founded upon sound, though homely, wisdom, and I determined to be guided by it. I held my tongue and replied laughingly to the captain's bantering about the trick he had played on me.

"The captain had made fully a dozen voyages of this kind in the slave coast, and he was considered the most successful of the slavers in the trade, as I learned from the crew. Therefore we had no difficulty in procuring a cargo of negroes from the slave factory which was situated some ten miles further inland. In all we took on board something like six hundred negroes of both sexes and all ages in about ten or twelve days. It wrung my heart to see the grief of the poor wretches as they were brought down to the barracks on the shore, and from there consigned to the hold of the vessel. I could do nothing for them, however, so I followed the advice of the old sailor and held my tongue.

THE CHINA MAIL.

BY JAMES D. M'GABE, JR.

"At the end of the twelfth day the captain announced that we would be off in a day or two, and gave orders to have the water casks taken ashore and filled with fresh water. The casks were at once brought on board and carried to the hold, and the work of filling them was begun.
"The next day we received information from the lookout on the coast that a large war vessel was off the mouth of the river, and that her boats had been recommissioning the entrance to the stream. This news determined the captain to sail at once, and orders were given to be ready to drop down the river that night. When it was fairly dark, all of our preparations having been made, we weighed anchor, and stood down the stream under light sail. All hands were on the alert to come on deck the hour at which the vessel, but we passed out of the stream and got to sea in safety. The captain was in high glee at this, and was loud in his predictions of a speedy and successful voyage. We were bound for the Florida coast, where our human cargo was already engaged.

"The weather was intensely hot, and I was sure that the poor negroes were suffering terribly in the close hold of the ship. They were regularly supplied with water, however, and were permitted to come on deck an hour at a time in parties of ten or fifteen, but this number on board was so large, that even with this privilege they were compelled to remain in the hold two and three days at a time. In a few days a sickening stench began to come up through the gratings of the hatches, and soon afterwards the number of captives began to decrease. From one to four black corpses were thrown overboard every day, and seized ravenously by the terrible sharks that followed the hour at which the negroes came on deck. I asked one of the men how many of the negroes generally died on the passage, and could not repress a shudder of horror as he replied coolly, 'Some-times half, sometimes more or less than half.'

"The captain's predictions of a speedy passage were not destined to be realized. We had fair winds for the first two weeks of our voyage, but at the end of that time commenced to encounter a series of dead calms that bade fair to detain us indefinitely. We suffered greatly with the heat. The hot sun glared down fiercely upon us, until the decks were so hot that it was painful to walk upon them. Not a breath of air came for three days, and for three days we suffered torture that I felt sure could be equalled only by those of the damned. The captain said he had never known such weather, and his face wore an anxious, uneasy look.

"But while our sufferings were so great, those of the wretched beings in the hold were indescribable. The stench from the hatches increased, and whenever I passed the gratings I could see a mass of dark faces gathered under them with panting lips and protruding tongues, striving vainly to catch a breath of air, and I knew that behind them were scores of others who were literally suffocating in the hold. The night and the thought almost maddened me, and when I saw the corpses go over the side to the sharks more rapidly than ever, it was with difficulty that I could restrain my excitement. The most hardened sailor on the ship seemed to feel the frightful condition of the negroes. The captain's face grew more anxious, and he became gloomy and silent. It seemed that we should never meet another breeze, and unless we were favored with one soon we felt sure that such terrible fate would befall us.

"A week passed away, and still no change. Over two hundred of the negroes had died, and the condition of the others was frightful beyond description. Many were covered with sores and were reduced to mere skeletons by their sufferings. The patient endurance of the negroes, which had hitherto marked their sorrow, and which had touched me as deeply as their woes themselves, now gave way to a species of frenzy. They would throng around the gratings and with cries of savage fury call to us in their native tongue, and shake their fists at us and grind their long white teeth in impatient rage. Their fury became so great, indeed, that it was dangerous for any one to venture into the hold; either to remove the dead or to distribute food and water. The captain therefore ordered that only such supplies as could be passed through the gratings should be given them until they learned 'to behave themselves.'

"This was a severe remedy, he said, but it was the only way to deal with such cases. His theory was at fault this time. The fury of the slaves increased, and they became so violent that there was really danger that they would break out of the hold and attack us. To compel them to be quiet the captain ordered the covers to be put down on the hatches. This was horrible, and even the mate who was a hardened wretch, protested against it. It was certain, he declared, to result in the death of all the negroes, who would soon suffocate if the hold was deprived of the scanty ventilation it then possessed. But the captain was firm. He said he had often tried the measure before, and that it was sure to be successful. If it did kill a few negroes that would be better than running the risk of having all our throats cut by them. There was no appeal from his decision, and after all it was thought by the men that so old a slaver ought to know how to manage a troublesome cargo. The hatches were shut down, but the cries and shouts grew louder and more furious.

"As the hatches were put down the captain went aft to his cabin. In a few minutes he came out hurriedly, and called for the mate. The mercury in the barometer, he said, was falling more rapidly than he had ever seen it. It was evident that the calm was about to be succeeded by one of the terrible wind storms for which the region is famous, and it was necessary to make everything fast at once. As he spoke we could hear a low, moaning sound in the air, that sure forerunner of the whirlwind, and we knew that the shipper was right in his prediction this time.
"In half an hour it came upon us with

a force that was terrible beyond description. The vessel quivered like an aspen leaf, and for a moment I thought the end of our voyage had come. The sky grew black as night, and to this there succeeded a dull, indistinct light, which was, I thought, worse than the darkness had been. The sea became covered with a yellow froth that boded no good to us. The wind blew as I hope never to see it blow again. It had not that wild, wrathful roar that is heard in our own waters, but it gave only a low moaning sound that made our hearts quail with dread. The ship was under bare poles when the squall struck us, but we drove along like a race-horse.

"The negroes in the hold had been quiet for some time, and the captain ordered the hatches to be taken off that the poor devils might have air. There was no lack of it now, he said, and he wanted them to have a breathing spell. The order was obeyed with alacrity, and though we could scarcely keep our footing on the decks, we exerted ourselves to the utmost to save the poor wretches we knew were perishing below. As the main hatch was opened we started back with a cry of alarm and horror. A dense and sickening smoke poured through the gratings, literally driving us from it.
"My God!" groaned the mate. 'They have fired the ship.'

"I sprang to the grating and called loudly to the negroes below, but no voice answered. The horrible truth then burst upon me in all its terrors. The negroes in their madness and despair had set the ship on fire, and had perished by the foul air and the smoke. This was not all. Their revenge had involved us as well as themselves, and we were on a burning ship in the midst of a terrible hurricane. I stood stupefied with horror as I realized these things. I was aroused by the voice of the captain shouting, excitedly:

"Down with the hatch. Quick, there! Make it fast. We may suffocate the fire in the hold if we can keep the air from it. Down quick, I say, for your lives."

"The covers were fastened down in an instant, and heavy tarpaulins matted over them. The other hatches had not been raised, but we covered them in this way also, hoping to shut out the air from the hold. Our situation was terrible, and we fully realized it, and exerted ourselves to keep down the fire. We might have passed through the gale in safety, but I had little hope of being able to keep down the flames. Then the thought that there were several hundred dead men below my feet, and that I had helped to bring them to their death was horrible.

"My worst fears were realized. The opening of the hatch had given the fire an advantage which was destined to prove fatal to us. In an hour I could feel, or I fancied I felt, the deck growing hot. I mentioned it to the captain, and received a savage command to mind my own business. In another hour, and when the storm was at its height, the smoke began to come through the cracks between the planking of the decks. The heat melted the pitch used in caulking them, and these seams became a source of supplying the fire with air which we could not prevent. Indeed the cracks grew wider as the heat shrunk the planks, and in half an hour more the deck was covered with a thick sickening smoke, and in some places the bright red glare of the flames was seen. It was in vain that we threw water over the decks, in vain that the waves would occasionally wash over us. The flames had gotten too fair a start to be checked, and we knew there was nothing but death in store for us.

"All efforts to extinguish the fire were now abandoned, and the crew commenced to prepare the boats. A launch of the ship washed one away, and the other was found to be unfit for use. I never saw such despair as I had that day on the faces of those sailors. I felt some one touch me on the arm, and looking around, I saw the old sailor who had advised me to make the best of my bargain.

"Come with me, lad," he whispered. "Every man must save himself now. But I cannot let you die here without trying to help you."

"I followed him along the deck. We passed at one of the water casks which had been temporarily stowed amidships. He had driven the bung into it after emptying it of water, and had lashed two ropes to it, while the rest had been busy about the boats. Obeying his instructions I fastened one of the ropes about my waist, and he made the other fast to his own body. One noticed us, and taking advantage of this we moved the empty cask to the bulwark, and jumped with it into the sea, and clung to the cask as it floated away on the billow.

"It's our only chance for life, lad," said the old sailor, gloomily, 'and it's a very slim one.'

"No one had seen us, and we floated away from the ship, leaving our doomed messmates in utter ignorance of our fate. In half an hour we saw the flames burst through the deck of the vessel and mount to the heavens. We watched the fire until the slaver was burned to the water's edge, and saw it settle down under the waves. The great crime against humanity had been avenged, and the career of the slaver was ended.

"For two days and nights after the storm died away we floated about on our cask, and at last, when we had abandoned all hope of ever seeing land again, we were picked up by a vessel bound for England. We did not tell the character of our ship, and were kindly treated until we reached England, where we soon found a vessel bound for New York, on which we took passage for home.

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